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ABSTRACT

A primary annex, built to relieve overcrowding, is attended by children registered in kindergarten through grade 3. The building consists of an open area organized into a number of learning centers plus three closed classrooms. The school's program is based on two concepts adapted from the British Infant School system: (1) family or vertical grouping and (2) the integrated day. Family grouping divides the children into five parallel groups with similar numbers of children of each age level in every group. In an integrated day system the school offers a wide variety of creative, intellectual, artistic, and physical activities. Each child selects from the school's offerings to meet his own personal interests. Subject matter and time are not compartmentalized as in a traditional school. (MLF)

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A DESCRIPTION OF CHARLES DICKENS ANNEX, 1971-72

October, 1972

Marilyn J. Reid

EA 004 969

Department of Planning and Evaluation
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A DESCRIPTION OF CHARLES DICKENS ANNEX, 1971-72

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgement	i
The Birth of Charles Dickens Annex	1
The Facilities (with sketches)	3
The Pupils	10
The Staff	11
A Day at Dickens Annex	13
Illustrations	15
Additional Observations	20
Conclusion	21
APPENDIX A: A Report on the First Year of Operation of Charles Dickens Annex Written by Its Staff	22
APPENDIX B: A Bibliography Offered by the Staff of Charles Dickens Annex	34

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The writer wishes to express her thanks to the staff of Charles Dickens Primary Annex who contributed some of the material in this report.

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- Miss Marjean Borjesson, Vancouver School Board photographer, who provided the illustrations in this report.

A DESCRIPTION OF CHARLES DICKENS ANNEX, 1971-72

The Birth of Charles Dickens Annex

Charles Dickens Annex, an elementary school for children in Kindergarten through Year 3, first opened its doors to pupils in September of 1971.

In recent years, the enrollment at Charles Dickens School has outgrown the existing facilities and this primary annex has been built to accommodate some of the younger children.

While the physical structure of the School is similar to that of other primary annexes in Vancouver, the way in which the pupils and teachers function is different.

The following statement of objectives for the school is based on information provided by teachers:

- To encourage self-confidence in the pupils.
- To stimulate a thirst for learning.
- To provide the right environment for children so that they can learn and develop at their own pace.
- To assist children in developing some independence and self-direction in their activities.
- To encourage respect in the children for other people, their rights and property.
- To let children be children. Two currently popular sayings express this goal--to "give children back their childhood", and "play is the work of children".

The program at Dickens Annex is based on the British Infant School system. Two concepts in particular were adapted from the British scheme--Family or Vertical Grouping, and the Integrated Day.

Family or Vertical Grouping is based on the premise that for the young child the best school arrangement is one resembling his family--an extended family with older and younger brothers and sisters. It is thought that young children will adapt to and learn best from such a situation. This arrangement is a non-graded grouping of children with an age span of several years. In England, this is generally two to three years of five and six year olds, or five, six, and seven year olds. At Dickens Annex there is a four-year age span with children aged from five through eight years. There are several benefits from family or vertical grouping:

- broader experience is provided by a wider age range;
- the child is able to progress at his own rate with limited opportunity for comparison with others;
- the younger child gains from the experience and knowledge of the older children;

- the older child learns to help younger children;
- children at all levels learn from observation of other children at different stages of development.

In a system with an Integrated Day, the child is treated as a whole person rather than as having distinct parts which are treated separately. The school offers a wide variety of creative, intellectual, artistic and physical activities. Each child chooses from these according to his interests, abilities, and moods, and for differing lengths of time. Each child selects from the school's offerings to meet his own personal interests. At Dickens Annex, subject matter and time are not compartmentalized as in a traditional school; thus the Annex is working on an Integrated Day.

With Family Grouping and the Integrated Day, there is a wide range of ages, levels of development, interests, abilities, and activities which requires the teacher to perceive and treat each child as an individual.

The program at Dickens Annex, with Family Grouping and the Integrated Day at its core, is based on certain assumptions and beliefs. Some of these are:

- Children have a basic desire to learn.
- The relationship between the teacher and the child is of prime importance.
- The child who is given the responsibility for making decisions regarding his own learning works more effectively.
- Learning is likely to be more efficient if it grows out of the interests of the learner rather than from the interests of the teacher, that is, when the school is adapted to the child and his needs rather than the reverse situation.
- The teacher's role is highly significant; she is a facilitator of learning.
- The quality of the environment is important.
- All children are different. Therefore, instead of forcing all children to follow a single program, each child should be permitted to develop in his own unique way.
- Experience with a variety of materials and in many activities aids in the child's general development, enables him to unfold his creative abilities and sharpens his senses. It contributes to the development of his skills in all areas of language, in mathematics and in science.

This report merely attempts to describe Charles Dickens Annex during its first year of operation and should not be interpreted as an evaluation of the program. It is anticipated that there will be a more extensive evaluation during the 1972-73 school year.

It should be noted that much of the description reflects the way Dickens Annex appeared to the observer-writer and may not coincide in all respects with the perceptions of the school's staff.

The Facilities

The Charles Dickens Annex is located in the southern half of a block that faces Glen Park in the 1000 Block East 23rd Avenue, Vancouver. The school's grounds remained unfinished during the first year of operation. However, the proximity of the park with no intervening road extended the play area. The park also proved of value for nature studies by the children.

The building consists of an open area, equivalent in size to four classrooms, and within which are library and wet working areas (Area 1), three closed classrooms (Areas 2, 3, and 4) one of which is primarily for the use of aphasic children (who are integrated, as they are able, into the activities of the rest of the pupils) and another classroom designed to be used for a kindergarten class. This room has various functions including that of a studio which houses many of the musical, drama, and art activities. One of the three closed classrooms functions as a learning centre emphasizing mathematics, social studies, and language arts. There is a gymnasium (Area 5). The hallway and covered play area are also utilized as learning areas.

The large open area is organized into a number of learning centres which are incorporated into three general areas--language arts, mathematics, and creative arts. Each of the five teachers* has a teacher station in Area 1 where she meets her class.

To give some idea of the arrangement, features, and a few of the activities possible in the open area, sketches of it have been included and are shown in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. These are approximations only and are presented to give the reader a clearer conception of the area. It should be noted that the placement of furnishings is not static and that specific items in the area change from day to day.

The furniture and much of the equipment for the new Annex were selected in May and June, 1971 by the Principal and three primary consultants who were to become teachers at the Annex in September. Some of the guidelines used in choosing these were: use, flexibility, portability, amount, size, height, shape, durability, and colour. Most of the furniture is "child-sized".

When the Annex opened on September 14, 1971, very little of the furniture and equipment had arrived. Temporary desks were supplied from the School Board Workshops. During the following weeks, the temporary furniture was replaced by that ordered earlier and by December most of the equipment had arrived.

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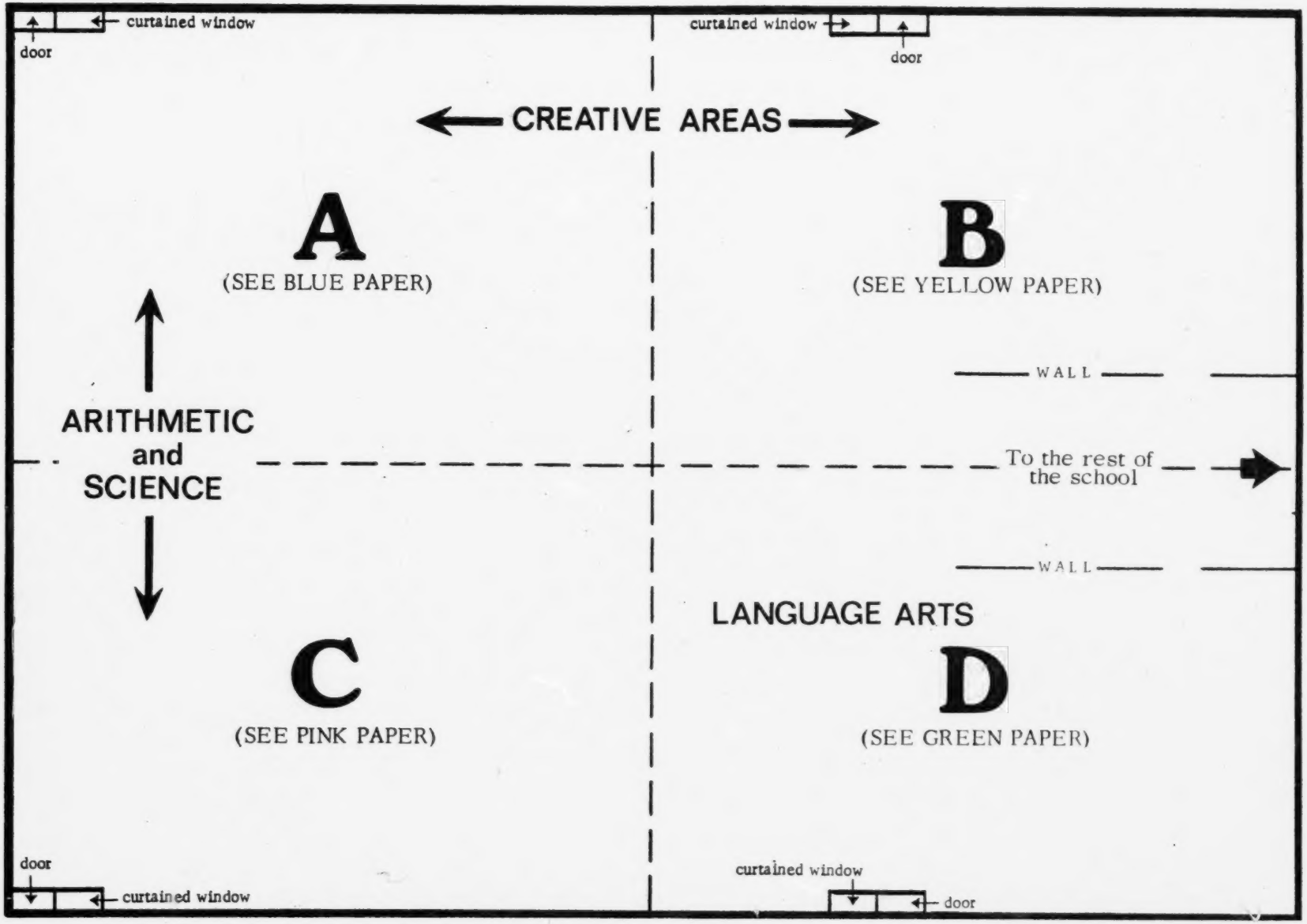
*A sixth teacher works with aphasic children. This report includes only limited consideration of the activities of the Aphasic Class as it operated, to a considerable extent, independently of the rest of the school.



N. B. These are only general areas with divisions arbitrarily selected - in actuality there is considerable overlap.

Figure 1: The Open Area at Charles Dickens Annex

~~~~~~~~ - partial, temporary partitions
~~~~~~~~

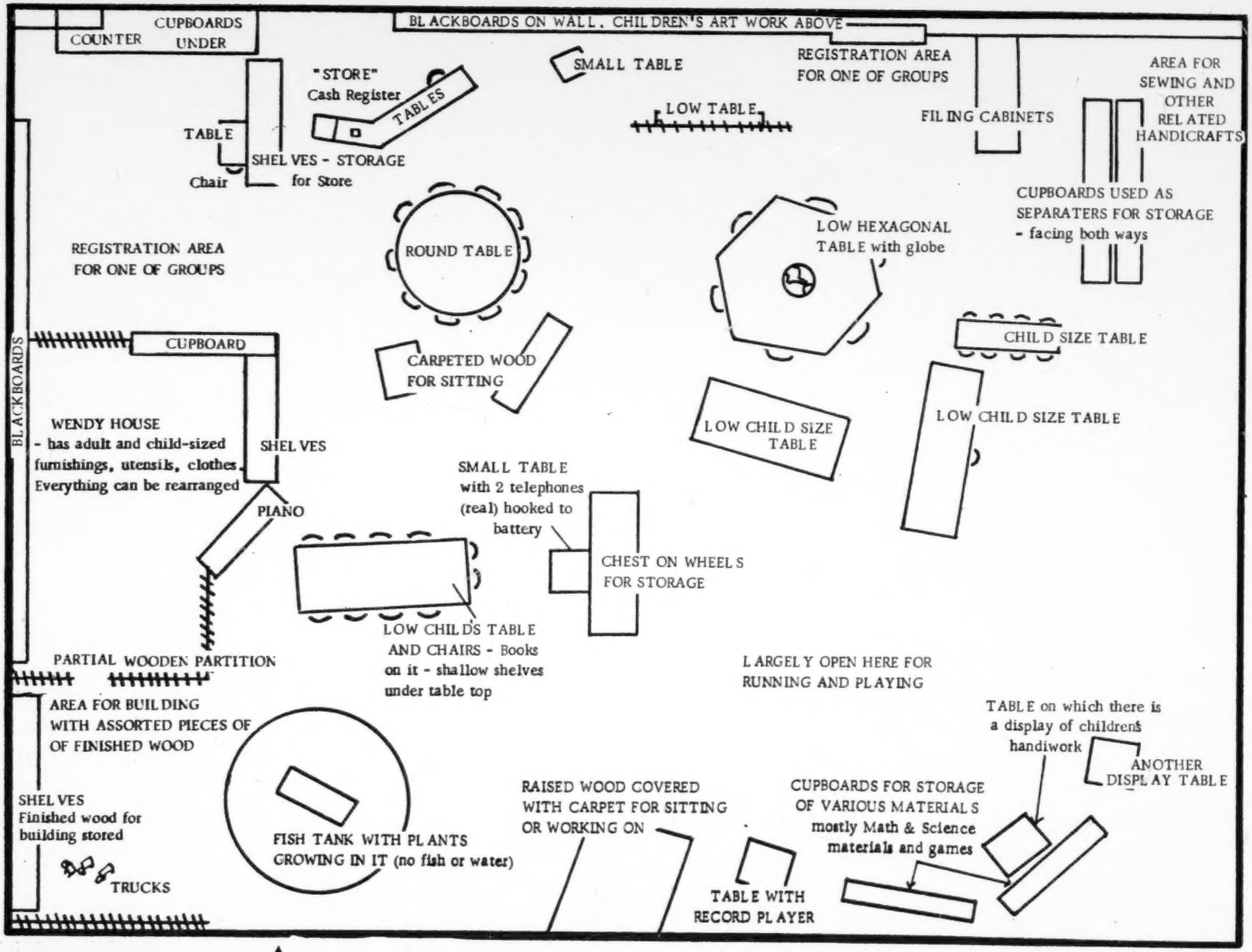

COUNTER
CUPBOARDS UNDER
BLACKBOARDS ON WALL. CHILDREN'S ART WORK ABOVE
"STORE"
Cash Register
TABLES
SMALL TABLE
REGISTRATION AREA FOR ONE OF GROUPS
AREA FOR SEWING AND OTHER RELATED HANDICRAFTS
LOW TABLE
FILING CABINETS
TABLE
Chair
SHELVES - STORAGE for Store
CUPBOARDS USED AS SEPARATERS FOR STORAGE - facing both ways
REGISTRATION AREA FOR ONE OF GROUPS
ROUND TABLE
LOW HEXAGONAL TABLE with globe
CUPBOARD
CHILD SIZE TABLE
BLACKBOARDS
CARPETED WOOD FOR SITTING
LOW CHILD SIZE TABLE
LOW CHILD SIZE TABLE
WENDY HOUSE - has adult and child-sized furnishings, utensils, clothes. Everything can be rearranged
SHELVES
SMALL TABLE with 2 telephones (real) hooked to battery
PIANO
CHEST ON WHEELS FOR STORAGE
LOW CHILDS TABLE AND CHAIRS - Books on it - shallow shelves under table top
PARTIAL WOODEN PARTITION
LARGELY OPEN HERE FOR RUNNING AND PLAYING
TABLE on which there is a display of childrens handiwork
AREA FOR BUILDING WITH ASSORTED PIECES OF OF FINISHED WOOD
ANOTHER DISPLAY TABLE
SHELVES Finished wood for building stored
FISH TANK WITH PLANTS GROWING IN IT (no fish or water)
RAISED WOOD COVERED WITH CARPET FOR SITTING OR WORKING ON
CUPBOARDS FOR STORAGE OF VARIOUS MATERIALS mostly Math & Science materials and games
TRUCKS
TABLE WITH RECORD PLAYER

Figure 2: Section A of the Open Area at Charles Dickens Annex

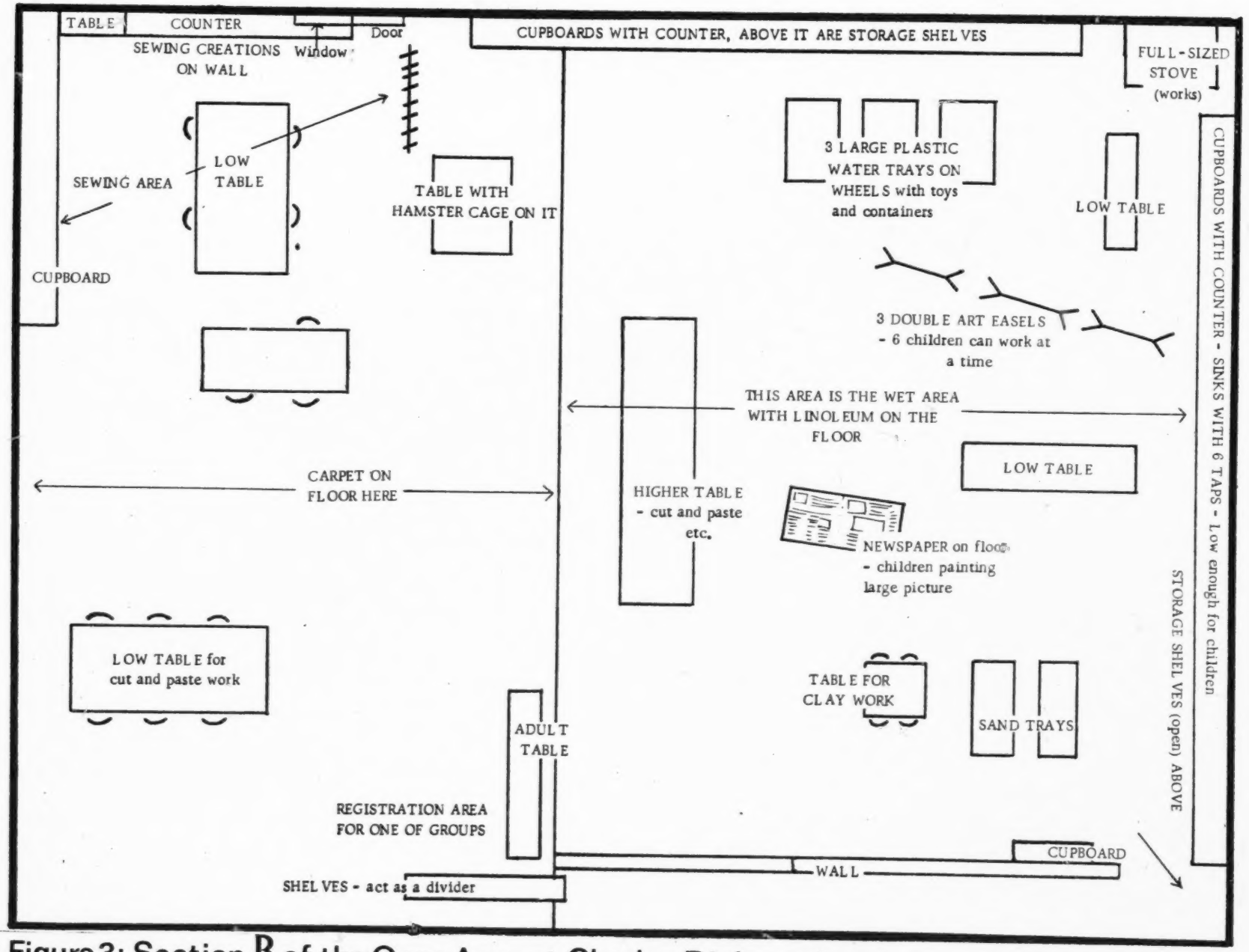


TABLE
COUNTER
Door
SEWING CREATIONS ON WALL
Window
CUPBOARDS WITH COUNTER, ABOVE IT ARE STORAGE SHELVES
FULL-SIZED STOVE (works)
SEWING AREA
LOW TABLE
TABLE WITH HAMSTER CAGE ON IT
3 LARGE PLASTIC WATER TRAYS ON WHEELS with toys and containers
LOW TABLE
CUPBOARD
3 DOUBLE ART EASELS - 6 children can work at a time
THIS AREA IS THE WET AREA WITH LINOLEUM ON THE FLOOR
CARPET ON FLOOR HERE
HIGHER TABLE - cut and paste etc.
LOW TABLE
NEWSPAPER on floor - children painting large picture
LOW TABLE for cut and paste work
TABLE FOR CLAY WORK
SAND TRAYS
ADULT TABLE
REGISTRATION AREA FOR ONE OF GROUPS
CUPBOARD
WALL
SHELVES - act as a divider
CUPBOARDS WITH COUNTER - SINKS WITH 6 TAPS - Low enough for children
STORAGE SHELVES (open) ABOVE

Figure 3: Section B of the Open Area at Charles Dickens Annex

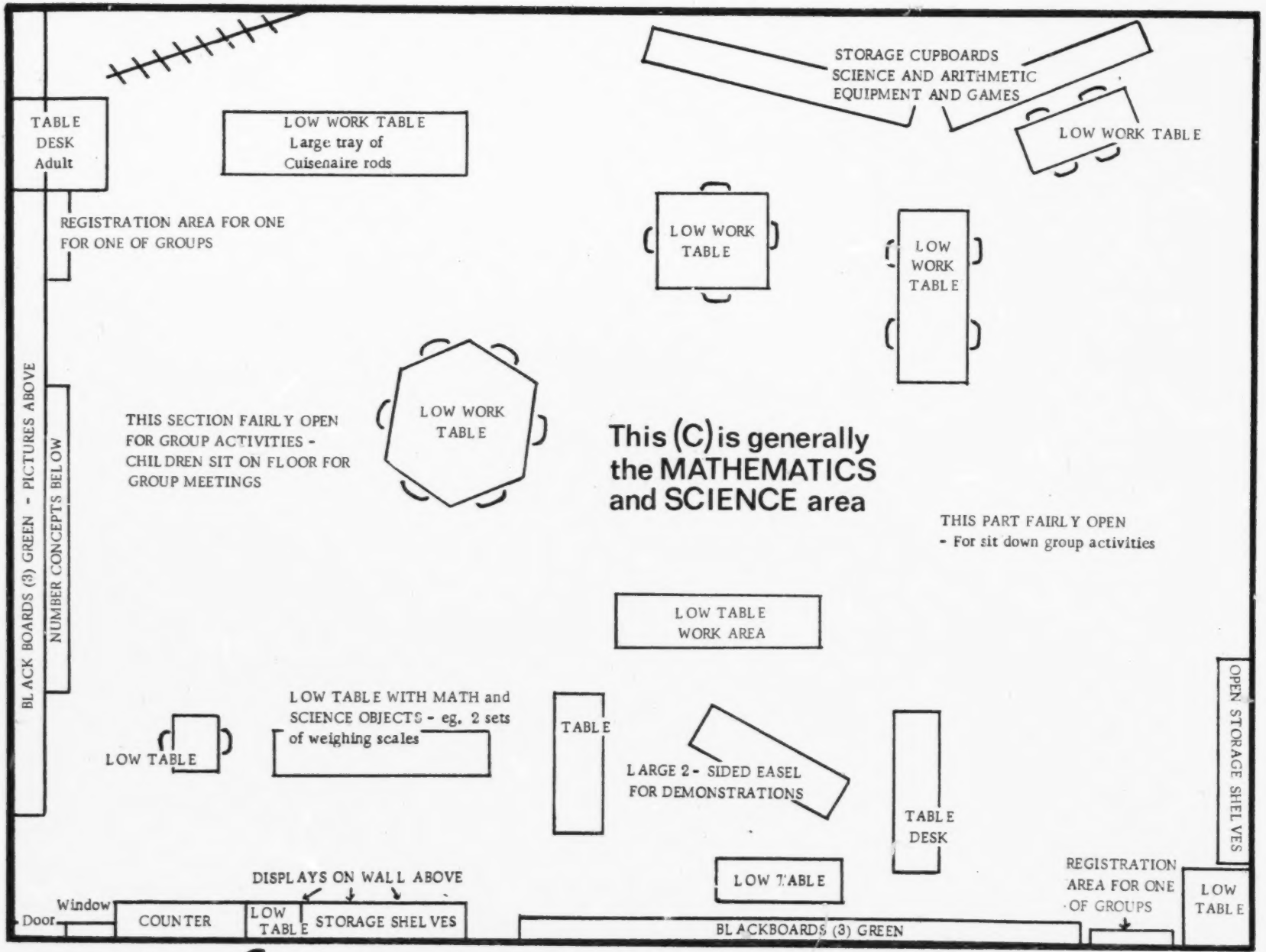


Figure 4: Section C of the Open Area at Charles Dickens Annex

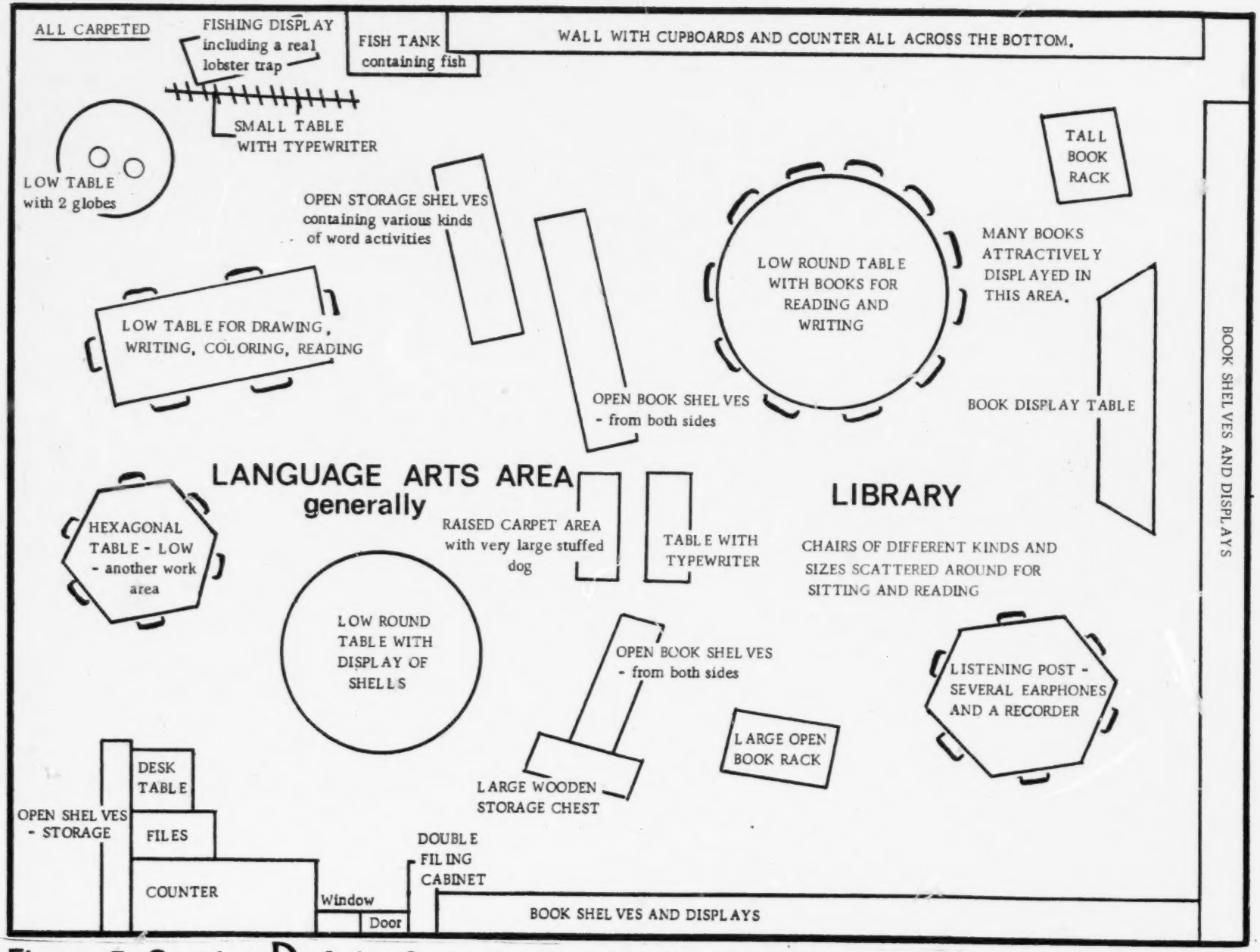

ALL CARPETED
FISHING DISPLAY including a real lobster trap
FISH TANK containing fish
WALL WITH CUPBOARDS AND COUNTER ALL ACROSS THE BOTTOM.
SMALL TABLE WITH TYPEWRITER
LOW TABLE with 2 globes
TALL BOOK RACK
OPEN STORAGE SHELVES containing various kinds of word activities
LOW ROUND TABLE WITH BOOKS FOR READING AND WRITING
MANY BOOKS ATTRACTIVELY DISPLAYED IN THIS AREA.
LOW TABLE FOR DRAWING, WRITING, COLORING, READING
OPEN BOOK SHELVES - from both sides
BOOK DISPLAY TABLE
BOOK SHELVES AND DISPLAYS
LANGUAGE ARTS AREA generally
LIBRARY
HEXAGONAL TABLE - LOW - another work area
RAISED CARPET AREA with very large stuffed dog
TABLE WITH TYPEWRITER
CHAIRS OF DIFFERENT KINDS AND SIZES SCATTERED AROUND FOR SITTING AND READING
LOW ROUND TABLE WITH DISPLAY OF SHELLS
OPEN BOOK SHELVES - from both sides
LISTENING POST - SEVERAL EARPHONES AND A RECORDER
LARGE OPEN BOOK RACK
LARGE WOODEN STORAGE CHEST
DESK TABLE
OPEN SHELVES - STORAGE
FILES
DOUBLE FILING CABINET
COUNTER
Window
Door
BOOK SHELVES AND DISPLAYS

Figure 5: Section D of the Open Area at Charles Dickens Annex

In addition to the equipment provided by the Vancouver School Board, the staff gleaned materials from many sources to provide for particular activities and projects. Considerable resourcefulness was required of the teachers in continually changing the surroundings to maintain and stimulate pupil interest. Some items in the school which illustrate the versatility required of the staff in obtaining extra materials were: a terrarium (aquarium, containing growing plants), an extensive seashell collection, and a fishing display which included a real lobster trap.

Partly to make maximum use of their facilities, the teachers worked out a weekly rotational schedule for the five groups of pupils and their teachers. At any given time, three groups were scheduled to be in the open area, another group was in Area 4 (the kindergarten room-studio), and the fifth group was in either Area 3 (learning centre classroom) or the gymnasium. This meant that on an average, children were scheduled for the open area 60% of the time (nine school periods of fifteen a week), Area 4 for 20% (three periods), and Area 3 or the gymnasium for 20% (three periods). It should be noted that this was a flexible arrangement.

As the whole school is considered in some respects to be one large open area, rather than just a part of it being open, children seemed to flow from one part to another. Although no activities were "scheduled" for the corridor, many were observed taking place there, e.g., an informal drama group was acting out "The Seven Dwarfs", several boys were creating a large paper surfboard, and in steady use were a small woodworking bench and tools set up in the hall.

Every child had a small shelf along the walls of the corridor which bore his name and where he could store his possessions.

The majority of the ornamentation in the school consisted of items created by the pupils. There were products of the children's efforts everywhere--attractively arranged in displays on tables as well as on the walls.

The Pupils

About 164 pupils* attended Dickens Annex during its first year of operation. All but a few of these were from the immediate area around the school. A half-dozen parents from other areas of Vancouver chose to have their children go to Dickens Annex. Another six children came from different parts of the city to be in the "Aphasic Class" located at the Annex.

The regular (non-aphasic) pupils were registered in Kindergarten through Grade 3 and their ages covered a range of four years. The children were divided into five parallel groups with similar numbers of children at each age level in every group, that is, the five teachers were responsible for like numbers of children aged five, six, seven, and eight years.

All kindergarten children attended school in the mornings and for the full morning. It was found that the kindergarten children could cope with this and that this arrangement was less disruptive than having some pupils come to school in the mornings and others in the afternoons or having them leave at 11:30 A. M.

*Slight variations in the total number of pupils occurred over the course of the year.

The Staff

The staff of Dickens Annex included six teachers and two full-time teaching assistants. One of the teachers worked with the six aphasic children and had little direct involvement with the program of the rest of the school. Three of the other five teachers were primary consultants with the Vancouver School Board prior to their appointment to Dickens Annex and were largely responsible for developing the program at the Annex. As there was no official school secretary, one of the teaching assistants spent about a fifth of her time doing the office work and the rest of her time with the children. The other teaching assistant was responsible for the audio-visual materials and had the primary responsibility for the school library.

There was no head teacher, as such. The principal of Dickens (main) School also administered the Annex. On matters concerning the Annex only, he made decisions after consulting the Annex staff. Any seniority among the teachers was held by the three ex-consultants who had a one-month rotating leadership of sorts. Each month, one ex-consultant was responsible for arranging the weekly planning meetings based on suggestions from the other staff members. In addition to this, frequent informal meetings occurred over coffee and lunch, before and after school.

These staff arrangements enabled the teachers to spend the full day working with the children.

All of the teachers had indicated an interest in teaching in an open area prior to being appointed to Dickens Annex.

Each teacher had the primary responsibility for coordinating the activities of one part of the school for a month at a time. For example, one teacher was responsible for the arithmetic and science section of the open area. Whenever her registration group was within the open area she remained for the most part within the arithmetic and science section to work with any of the children engaged in activities there. The onus was on her to make changes and additions to that section. At the end of a month, another of the teachers assumed the primary responsibility for this area of the school.

Thus, while each teacher registered a group of 29 to 33 children, she was also responsible for an area of the school and the activities within it. In this latter capacity she was directly involved with all of the pupils in the school at some time during every week. In some respects then, each teacher was responsible for 158 children.

Every teacher tried to meet once a week, individually, with the children registered to her to discuss what they had been doing. The teacher went over her record of each child's activities with him, and pointed out areas which he might have neglected, offered him encouragement to try new activities and helped him balance his own program. The length and extent of the discussions varied according to the needs of individual children. This provided a regular evaluation of every child's progress and helped insure that the children were receiving the greatest possible value from their school experiences, i.e., that they were not restricting themselves to engaging in only two or three activities to the exclusion of others.

A Day at Dickens Annex

To give some idea of the kind of program that existed at Dickens Annex, the nature of the "schedule" that was observed on several occasions is described here*.

The school day was divided into three parts or periods. The first period lasted until recess, the second from recess till noon, and the third period was the afternoon.

Children were free to enter the school after 8:45 A.M. but in actuality many entered earlier. Shortly before school started at 9:00 A.M., the pupils went to an area to begin the day. Generally, three of the five registered groups went to their parts in the open area (Area 1), another group was in the "music room" (Area 4), and the fifth group was in the regular-sized room (Area 3) or the gymnasium (Area 5).

Pupils in the open area selected red, yellow, or blue cards** indicating their choice of activities and put the cards in the small folders on which were their names. The earliest pupils had the greatest choice of activities since only specified numbers of cards for each activity were available. The teachers were there to help with reading cards, decision-making, etc., as well as checking attendance. The children then went off to the various parts of the room to begin their "work". Pupils in the regular-sized room appeared to have a somewhat similar arrangement on a smaller scale while those in the music room or gymnasium tended to work more as a single group.

During this time, there were three teachers in the open area, one usually located in and responsible for each of the arithmetic, language arts, and creative arts areas. One or both of the teaching assistants might also be there. For each of the other two groups there was usually one teacher. The children's activities were guided and supervised by the teachers who moved from child to child and from group to group.

*While a program of activities similar to this was observed on several occasions, this does not mean that there was an identical schedule for every day. It is important to note that this is a very general outline of a sample day. Considerable variation and flexibility in the arrangements were noted on different days and among the groups.

**All activities were listed in a general way on colour-coded cards--red identified arithmetic and science activities, yellow was for language arts, and blue for creative arts. Written on the cards were the names of areas of the room or activities, e.g., library, water table, big blocks. Each registration group of children had a similar selection of cards. This, plus the fact that there were limited numbers of cards available for each activity, resulted in a fairly even distribution of children around the area.

A few minutes before recess, pupils gathered around the teacher with whom they were registered. At this time, each teacher spoke briefly with every child in her group to discuss and make a note of what the child had been doing so far that day. This was an informal situation with the pupils sitting on the carpet in a semi-circle around the teacher.

The children were then dismissed for recess in a novel way--they left a few at a time. The teacher said, for example, all those with yellow socks can leave, then those with striped pants, followed by children with terry-towel shirts, etc. The teacher encouraged the children to be observant by this as well as easing the congestion in the corridor where outdoor clothes were hung. The dismissal procedures lasted about five minutes.

After recess, the pattern was in essence the same, that is, the children went to their scheduled areas, chose and engaged in their activities, then shortly before noon got together in groups with their teachers. The teachers again spoke with each child and recorded his activities before dismissal for lunch in the same manner as they had for recess. Sometimes, teachers read stories to the children for a few minutes in their gatherings before the noon break.

Most children went home for lunch but others ate in the gymnasium. Particularly towards the latter part of the lunch hour, children began drifting through the teaching areas again as they had prior to school opening in the morning.

At 1:00 P.M. the children convened in their groups to have a quiet period during which their teachers read stories to them. The story-telling lasted for about one-half hour after which the groups broke up and scattered to the various activities as they had done in the morning. This arrangement continued for the balance of the school day.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The following four pages show illustrations of the kinds of activities that are characteristic of the program at Charles Dickens Annex. Any or all of these activities may be taking place at one time.

Self-expression in the gymnasium.

A natural fascination with water encourages the child to learn its properties.

An inviting, comfortable place for reading and sharing ideas.

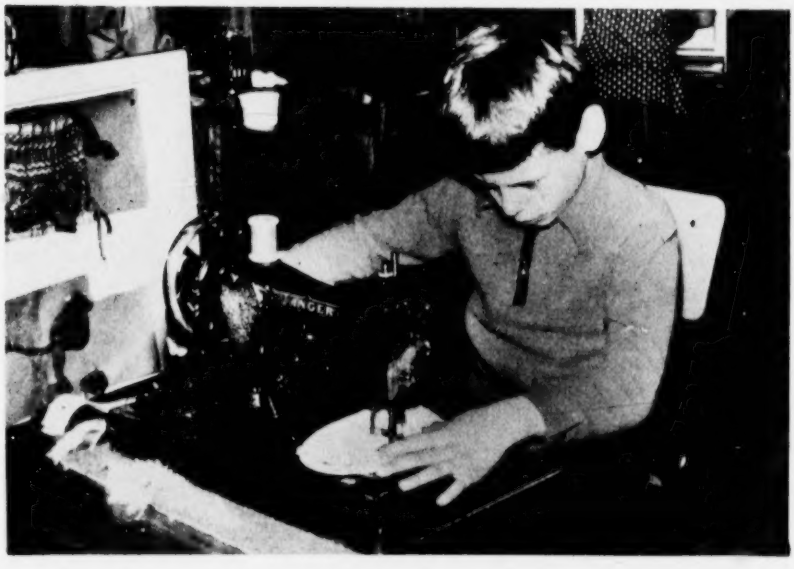
The listening post within the school's attractive library.

An overview of part of the open area.

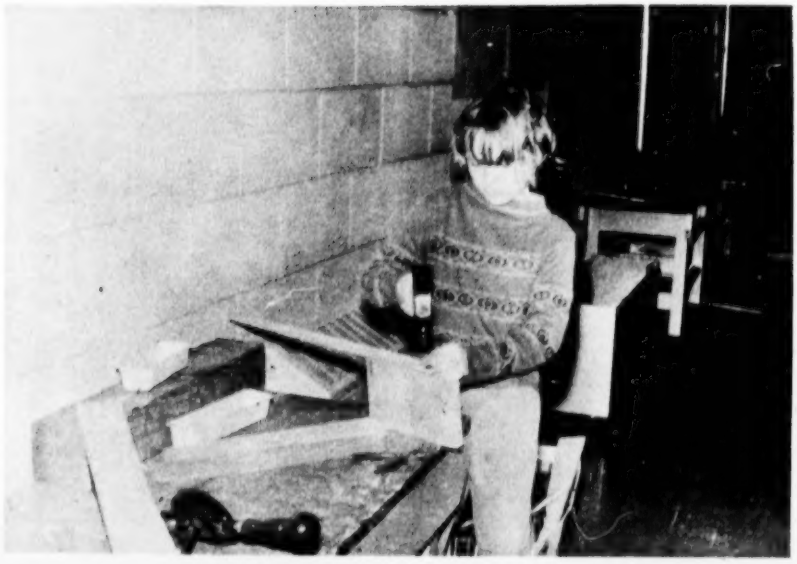
The building corner where imaginations are given constructive outlets.

Typing is fun and facilitates coordination and language development.

Learning to read and write with the teacher's help.



Who says that only High School girls take sewing?



The carpentry shop in the corridor.

Playing "store" involves use of creative, language, and mathematical skills.

Time for the teacher to catch up on what everyone's been doing.

Additional Observations

1. Special efforts were made by the staff to involve the parents of pupils and to neutralize their concerns about the new school and its program. Invitations were extended to parents to attend several meetings and to make informal visits. The teachers held individual conferences with parents following the first and second reporting periods.

2. Each child kept a record of his activities in a journal. In addition, many children aged six years or older had diaries in which they could write whatever they wanted. The journals were for the benefit of the child and his teachers but the diaries were considered to be the child's private property.

3. The pupils were accustomed to having many visitors at the school and paid little attention to them.

4. Each child was responsible for any cleaning up that was necessary.

5. There were no bells to announce recess, noon, etc.

6. The noise from each group and by individual children didn't seem to interfere with or distract others. In fact the "noise" was more of a steady low hum rather than distinct loud sounds.

Conclusion

The most fitting way to end this description of Dickens Annex would seem to be an expression of the teachers' feelings about the program after its first year of operation. All of the teachers said that they would prefer to stay in an open area situation rather than return to a traditional school. They are even more convinced than they were at the beginning of the school year (1971) of the greater suitability of the kind of program at Dickens Annex for primary aged children. To quote the staff: "The program has now been in existence for one year and the staff has become more enthusiastic each day about this approach to learning."

APPENDIX A

A REPORT ON THE FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION OF CHARLES DICKENS ANNEX WRITTEN BY ITS STAFF

CHARLES DICKENS SCHOOL ANNEX

The enrolment at Charles Dickens School increased from 669 in the school year 1962-63 to 857 in the school year 1967-68. Between 1964 and 1968 four classrooms were constructed in the basement areas and a portable classroom moved on to the play area in front of the school but accommodation still remained inadequate.

The building of a primary annex to accommodate the younger children who lived south of Kingsway was suggested as a solution to the problem and the construction of such a building was placed on the Capital Referendum in March, 1968. This referendum was approved by the taxpayers.

The land for the Annex was purchased and assembled in 1970 but approval from the Department of Education for the construction of the building was not received until March, 1971.

Construction commenced in April and the pupils moved into the Annex on September 14, 1971, having spent the first week of school in the main building.

The Charles Dickens Annex is located on the southern half of a block that faces Glen Park in the 1000 block East 23rd Avenue. The design follows the standard specification for primary annexes in Vancouver and is very similar to General Brock School Annex. The teachers and the principal were not consulted in regard to the design of this building. Only one change was made in the building and that change involved enlarging the wet work area in the open area section by eliminating the teachers' planning room. Although this

change was suggested on October 15, 1970, the change was not made until the contract had been let many months later.

The building consists of an open area, equivalent in size to four classrooms, a library area, a wet working area, two closed classrooms, offices, etc., a closed classroom designed to be used for a kindergarten class, an activity room and a covered play area.

PLAN OF CHARLES DICKENS ANNEX

Approximately 160 pupils were enrolled in the school from the local community including 10 students from the Livingstone area east of Fraser and north of 25th Avenue. One closed classroom was set aside for an Aphasic Class in which 6 children from different parts of the city were enrolled.

In selecting the staff for the new Annex, the principal established one initial requirement and that was that each member of the staff would wish to work in an open area. One member of the main school primary staff was interested in working in an open area.

The term of duty for three primary consultants with the Vancouver School Board was coming to an end in June, 1971. The consultants felt the same way about children and wished to develop a programme for primary pupils that would reflect their feelings. Arrangements were made for the three consultants to be on the Annex staff.

A fifth teacher at another school who was teaching in a closed classroom and wished to teach in an open area was placed on the Annex staff.

Since three of the assigned staff members were just completing terms as consultants it seemed redundant to have a head teacher to provide leadership in curriculum planning and in-service training. Instead of appointing a head teacher and a relieving teacher the principal asked the Head of Education to provide two full-time staff assistants. This request was granted. It enabled each teacher to spend the full day working with children.

Many meetings were held in May and early June, 1971, to prepare the furniture and equipment orders for the new Annex. Catalogues and other descriptive materials were obtained as well as a requisition prepared for an annex built earlier. These first meetings were attended by the three consultants and the principal. Some of the guidelines in choosing the furniture and equipment were:

1. use
2. flexibility

3. portability
4. amount
5. size
6. height
7. shape
8. durability
9. colour

Once the furniture and equipment order had been approved further meetings were held to continue more intensively the study of the philosophy and the planning of the programme. All five teachers and the principal were involved in these discussions. Topics discussed at these meetings included:

--The relationship between the teacher and the child
--The individual development of each child
--The development of attitudes
--The learning process
--The quality of the environment

When the Annex opened on September 14 very little of the furniture and equipment that had been ordered had arrived. Temporary desks were supplied from the School Board workshops.

During the following weeks the temporary furniture was replaced by that ordered earlier and by December a majority of the equipment had been supplied although some was to continue to trickle in until May.

The principal administers the Annex directly as though it were part of the main school building. Administrative

decisions affecting the Annex only are made by the principal following consultation with the Annex staff.

Programme planning meetings are held every Monday afternoon from 3:30 to 5:00. These meetings are attended by the Annex teaching staff and the principal and are chaired on a rotating basis by one of the ex-consultants. The chairman, who occupies the position for a month at a time, is responsible for preparing an agenda for the meeting. Staff members present to the chairman of the month any topics they wish to be discussed.

The whole school is shared by all of the classes. There are seven identifiable learning areas. They are the open area (Area 1), three closed classrooms (Areas 2, 3, and 4), the gymnasium (Area 5), the hallway and the outdoor area.

Area 2 accommodates a group of aphasic children who are integrated into the activities as they are able.

Area 3 functions as a learning centre emphasizing mathematics, social studies and language arts.

Area 4 was designed as a kindergarten room and is somewhat larger than a standard classroom. It is used as a studio with emphasis on music, drama and art.

Area 1 is the largest learning area in the school and is equivalent in size to four classrooms. It contains a library area and a wet work area.

This large open area is organized into a number of learning centres which are incorporated into three general areas, language arts, mathematics and creative arts.

Each of the five teachers has a teacher station in Area 1 where she meets her class.

An informal timetable is in effect to provide for maximum use of the gymnasium and convenient and efficient use of Areas 3 and 4.

The staff has created a rich learning environment in which each child can participate. Experience with a variety of materials and in many activities aids in the child's general development, enables him to unfold his creative abilities and sharpens his senses. It develops his skills in all areas of language, in mathematics and in science.

The programme at Charles Dickens Annex is based on certain assumptions. These assumptions were made as a result of discussions at numerous meetings. Some of these assumptions are:

Children have a basic desire to learn.

The relationship between the teacher and the child is of prime importance.

The child who is given the responsibility of making decisions regarding his own learning works more effectively.

The teacher's role is highly significant.

The quality of the environment is important.

In order to put these assumptions into practice, two types of organization were adopted--Vertical or Family Grouping and the Integrated Day.

Each child was placed in a class with one teacher basically responsible for him. The children at Charles Dickens Annex were divided into five parallel groups in which each of the age groups in the school was divided equally among five teachers.

	Age as of Dec. 31, 1971			
	5 years	6 years	7 years	8 years
Mrs. Beacham	8	9	7	7
Mrs. Douglas	9	9	4	10
Miss Grant	7	10	6	8
Miss Proctor	8	8	4	12
Mrs. Robarts	8	9	3	12

No particular guidelines were set for the placement of children. However, the following may be noted:

1. The teacher who came from Dickens Main School, enrolled many of those children with whom she had been working during the previous school year.

2. Some children had particular need to be with brothers and sisters so were placed together.

3. On the basis of discussion with parents and staff members, principal and counsellor, three children were moved to different classes within the school during the school year.

The idea of having a multi-age group with each teacher was adopted because it gave each child in the school advantages in the following ways:

1. Each child has a wider range of relationships and social experiences.

2. With the exception of the eldest for this beginning year, the children will stay with the same teacher for more than one year. This provides a greater sense of belonging, support, and security.

3. Each child has the opportunity to develop naturally at his own rate without the disadvantage of comparisons which can be made more easily in a homogeneous age group.

4. The existence of a wide range of materials and experiences allows for different rates of learning for individual children.

5. The younger children are aided by the older ones and the older children's learning is reinforced through observation of those in earlier stages.

It was felt that it would be conducive to staff teamwork if each team member had a similar class assignment. The conventional primary timetable is not used at the Annex. This type of timetable is not used for the following reasons:

> Learning is likely to be more effective if it grows out of what interests the learner rather than what interests the teacher.
>
> The adult concept of a day fragmented into small parcels of time means little to young children whose ideas are as yet immature regarding time.
>
> A child's day flows from one experience to another and it is not desirable to compartmentalize subject matter.

Since all that was formerly compartmentalized in a conventional school--subject matter and time--have been integrated, the Annex is working on an Integrated Day.

Every parent and teacher knows that the most powerful form of motivation comes from the child's own purpose, not somebody else's. When a child urgently wants to learn, his sense of purpose brings together his energies and all his abilities and talents are devoted to the achievement of his purpose. Wanting to perform a task or learning a skill awakens the capacity to attempt it.

A schedule has been arrived at through discussion with children and amongst staff in order to facilitate the best use of materials and space available. In order to save valuable activity time, charts have been placed on bulletin boards for the children's use to give them guidance in what is available at the time of choosing. This chart also enables a child to balance his day and assures him of a full programme.

When a programme such as this is undertaken it may be expected that considerable concern will be expressed by some parents about the value of some of the activities in which the children are engaged.

A considerable effort was made to meet this concern.

1. All the parents whose children were to attend the Annex were invited to a meeting at the Main School in June at which the proposed programme was described and discussed.

2. Parents were invited to the Annex in October with a choice of an afternoon or evening meeting. The meetings were held in the open area and the programme was discussed thoroughly.

3. Parents were able to observe the children at work during the Official Opening in November.

4. Conferences were held with parents following the first reporting period.

5. An afternoon and an evening meeting were held early in the spring to answer further questions and to interpret specific aspects of the programme.

6. Parents were invited to visit the Annex on an individual basis at their convenience during school hours. Many parents have taken advantage of this opportunity.

7. Parent-Teacher Conferences were held following the second reporting period.

Evaluation of the programme was carried out continuously throughout the year. This was done mainly at regularly held staff meetings where decisions were made regarding making adjustments to the programme in order to meet the needs of the children.

Evaluation of each pupil's progress and development was made through the keeping of daily records of individual children's work. The matter of a more extensive evaluation of each pupil's progress is under study.

The programme has now been in existence for one year and the staff has become more enthusiastic each day about this approach to learning.

APPENDIX B

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OFFERED BY THE STAFF OF CHARLES DICKENS ANNEX

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